

Newsletter

April – May 2013

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In Other News ...

Events Calendar

Featured Success

The Innovation Working Group (IWG) held its third plenary meeting April 24 at the Microsoft Innovation and Policy Center in Washington, D.C. U.S. Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment Robert Hormats and then Russia Deputy Prime Minister Vladislav Surkov co-chaired the gathering and addressed the group in an executive session. The Department of State's

Special Representative for Commercial and Business Affairs, Lorraine Hariton and Russian Deputy Minister of Economic Development Oleg Fomichev led their respective delegations during the day-long meeting.



The IWG meeting at Microsoft

The Working Group oversaw the establishment of four new partnerships through the signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs): Cisco and the Skolkovo Foundation, Cisco and SkolTech, Maryland and the biopharma cluster Pushchino, and the University of Wisconsin and “Northern” Biopharmaceutical Cluster Development Center. Ten other projects were presented—including the announcement of the U.S. - Russia Innovation Corridor and the launch of the Business of Innovative Technologies (BIT) Competition.

The meeting was well attended with up to 80 participants in some of the sessions. Working

group members included innovation experts from the Russian and U.S. private sectors, non-governmental organizations, universities, and governments. Participants discussed the findings from a report on legislative obstacles to innovation in the United States and Russia. The report was commissioned by the IWG and written by a group of U.S. and Russian lawyers with the support of the American Bar Association, the U.S. Chamber in Moscow, and the Skolkovo Foundation. The report recommended amendments, as well as the adoption of new laws, to improve the legal conditions for conducting innovation-related activities in both the U.S. and Russia.

The meeting was followed by offsite visits to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the newly-opened 1776 business incubator in Washington, DC, and the Maryland biotech corridor. On April 25, the NIH put together a program that discussed the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program, technology transfer, patents, and research and development.



Innovation Working Group delegates at the University of Maryland's Baltimore BioPark

To underscore regional cooperation between the State of Maryland and several biotech clusters in Russia, the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development and the University of Maryland hosted a full-day program on April

26. The Maryland visit included an additional MOU signing between the University of Maryland and the University of Nizhny Novgorod, as well as a tour of the University of Maryland's Baltimore BioPark.

Business Development and Economic Relations

U.S.-Russia Standards & Conformity Assessment Forum

The Business Development and Economic Relations Working Group (BDERWG) hosted a Standards and Conformity Forum May 30 at the Moscow World Trade Center. The Forum brought together experts from the U.S. and Russian governments, standards setting bodies, conformity assessment organizations, trade associations and individual companies. The aim of the exchanges is to increase bilateral cooperation in standards development and conformance. The event was particularly timely due to Russia's recent accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), which obligates observation of principles in the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement.



Commerce Department's Joseph Wereszynski speaks on standards

The Forum began with an overview of the Russian and U.S. standards systems and continued with a discussion on best practices for implementing the WTO's Agreement on

Technical Barriers to Trade in order to create a better business environment. The event concluded with specific recommendations for cooperation with respect to WTO commitments and specific industries. Speakers included Commerce Deputy Assistant Secretary for Europe Matthew Murray, Director General of the Moscow World Trade Center Vladimir Salamatov, and Russian Ministry of Industry and Trade Evgenyi Petrosyan.

The World Trade Center Moscow estimates 330 participants attended the event.

Counternarcotics

Working Group Meets in Sochi

The Counternarcotics Working Group (CNWG) held its eighth meeting May 29 – 31 in Sochi, Russia. During the event, U.S. co-chair Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) Director Gil Kerlikowske and Russian co-chair Federal Drug Enforcement Service (FSKN) Director Victor Ivanov shared views on a wide range of working group collaborative exchanges.

CNWG sub-working group reports highlighting the continued productive cooperation between the Federal Drug Control Service of the Russian Federation and the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and between the Ministry of Health of Russia and the United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) were presented during the plenary meeting.

Additionally, discussions were held regarding countermeasures against money laundering within the illicit narcotics trade. Finally, the co-chairs heard reports on Russian and U.S. counter narcotic activities and programs in Central and South American countries.



Co-chairs Kerlikowske and Ivanov at the Sochi plenary

The co-chairs of the Working Group agreed to continue the cooperation between the FSKN and ONDCP in supporting the two governments' shared goals to eliminate global centers of drug production and drug trafficking. They also agreed to hold the next meeting of the Working Group in the United States in the second half of 2013.

Defense Relations

Missile Defense Meeting

The Enhanced Missile Defense sub-Working Group of the BPC's Defense Relations Working Group assembled on April 30 in Brussels for the first missile defense consultations under the BPC since the sub-Working Group last met in November 2011. Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Dr. James N. Miller, met with the Russian Deputy Minister for Defense Anatoly Antonov to engage in consultations.

Education, Culture, Sports, and Media

The Music of Los Texmaniacs

The musical group Los Texmaniacs, hailing from the American southwest, performed at the U.S. Ambassador's residence in Moscow, Spaso House, on May 16. The group, which plays in

the traditional *Conjunto* style, helped conclude the Second Festival of Traditional American Music, which was held in different cities of Russia during March, April and May. In the U.S. and Mexico, a conjunto band is composed of four main instruments: the accordion, the bajo sexto, an electric bass, and a drum kit.

Los Texmaniacs is a traditional quartet comprised of Max Baca on bajo sexto, David Farías on accordion, Óscar García on electric bass, and Lorenzo Martínez on the drums. Hosting musical groups like this concert by Los Texmaniacs supports the goals of the Education, Culture, Sports and Media Working Group.



L to R: David Farías, Max Baca, and Lorenzo Martinez

Alumni Reunion in St. Petersburg

On April 3, the United States Consulate General in St. Petersburg hosted its first reunion of alumni of the International Visitor Leadership Program, Open World Program and U.S. NATO Tours. Nearly 70 alumni attended the event at the Consul General's Residence.

During the reception, many alumni spoke about the impact of their experiences in the United States on their professional activities; several noted that they are still in contact with one or more of their American professional peers. Following the networking opportunity afforded by the reception, the alumni were treated to a performance by the Modern Blues Masters, a

trio participating in the Second Festival of Traditional American Music organized by CEC Arts Link, an organization that engages communities through international arts partnerships, with support from the U.S. Mission to Russia as part of the Education, Culture, Sports and Media Working Group.

Mass Media Sub-Working Group Co-Chairs Discuss Plans for 4th meeting

Mass Media Sub-Working Group Co-Chairs Maureen Cormack and Mikhail Guzman met in Washington D.C. to discuss the agenda for the sub-working group's 4th meeting, which is being planned for the end of July in St. Petersburg. They agreed to continue to concentrate on the same themes that have been the subject of previous meetings, including: the evolving profession of journalism, the evolving business of media, new media technologies, and ethics in media. The two co-chairs discussed the second U.S. - Russia Young Professional Exchange program, which will take place later in the Fall as a follow-on to last year's successful exchange, that allowed 20 U.S. and Russian journalists to engage in a study tour in each other's countries.



Sub-Media Working Group co-chairs Cormack and Guzman and as well Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary Berbena

Midwest Music in the Far East

On April 4 – 10, the Horseshoe Road band from Oklahoma visited Vladivostok, Nakhodka and Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy as a part of the American Music Abroad program. During their short stay the musicians gave five performances in concert halls, clubs and a children's rehabilitation center, receiving standing ovations after each show. Kyle Dillingham (violin), Peter Markes (guitar), and Brent Saulsbery (double bass) shared the heritage of American music from Oklahoma through their virtuoso skills.



Horseshoe Road

The band invited local musicians to join them wherever they went, enjoying the accompaniment and collaboration of the Vladivostok balalaika ensemble and an outstanding flutist from Kamchatka. These concerts support the efforts of the Education, Culture, Sports, and Media Working Group.

Rumble on the Rails

On May 15, “The Rumble on the Rails” pitted a host of world and Olympic wrestling champions against each other in front of a capacity crowd at New York’s historic Grand Central Terminal. A collaborative effort between USA Wrestling and the urban youth nonprofit Beat the Streets,

the event was held in part to promote efforts to prevent the sport of wrestling from being cut from the 2020 Olympic Games. The BPC’s Education, Culture, Sports, and Media Working Group worked closely with Team USA on the logistics of the event.



Jordan Burroughs (USA) vs. Saba Khubezhty (Russia)

The State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs’ SportsUnited Division is working with Russian officials on future sports exchanges, including a program involving Paralympics athletes to be held in conjunction with the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

Jon Alpert Explains: “A man with a camera can change the world”

On May 20 – 29, award-winning American reporter and documentary filmmaker Jon Alpert conducted a series of discussions and interviews about the challenges of his profession, reporters’ professional ethics and the opportunities of modern documentary filmmaking.

He discussed his interviews with Fidel Castro and Saddam Hussein, and also shared his experiences interviewing a criminal in action and reporting within a war zone with journalists, reporters, filmmakers and journalism students in Vladivostok, Khabarovsk and Birobidzhan.



Jon Alpert engages aspiring reporter

The founder of Downtown Community Television Center in New York City, Jon Alpert, reflecting on his illustrious career, exhorted the future journalists that a brave and honest man with a camera in his hand can make the world a better place. These discussions were held under the auspices of the Education, Culture, Sports and Media Working Group.

Environment

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Atlanta, GA hosted a delegation, May 13 – 17, from the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE). EPA experts shared their experience in implementation of Superfund and Brownfields programs at the regional level.

Presentations by the EPA emphasized community-based land clean-up and remediation. The Russian guests toured the award-winning redevelopment site, “Atlantic Station.” They visited the “Atlanta Life Cycle Building Center,” a showplace for the concept of deconstruction rather than demolition, which provides a marketplace for recovered building materials that otherwise would end up in landfills. They also visited the Ponce City Market, the largest adaptive reuse project in Atlanta's history, in which the 2.1 million square foot historic Sears Roebuck warehouse was transformed into a mixed use development for

office, retail and residential living. The Russian delegation attended the 2013 National Brownfields Conference.



EPA and MNRE visit the “Atlanta Life Cycle Building Center.” Atlanta, GA, Photo credit: Environmental Protection Agency

At the close of the visit, the MNRE delegation invited EPA experts to have follow-up technical consultations at Russian remediation sites near Lake Baikal in the Republic of Buryatia and in the Nizhni Novgorod Region. These efforts support the goals of the Environment Working Group.

Health

Health Working Group Meets in Geneva

The BPC's Health Working Group met May 21 in Geneva, Switzerland during the annual meeting of the World Health Assembly.



U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius (on left) and Russian Minister of Health Veronika Skvortsova (on right) with their Health Working Group teams. Photo credit: Department of Health and Human Services

The participants discussed and exchanged ideas for future cooperative activities in four areas: Non-Communicable Diseases and Healthy Lifestyles, Maternal and Child Health, Scientific Cooperation, and Global Health. They also reviewed progress made since the Working Group's inaugural meeting on September 24, 2010 in Washington, D.C. and the second meeting on April 27, 2011 in Moscow.

U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius led the U.S. delegation. Russian Minister of Health Veronika Skvortsova led the Russia delegation.

Innovation

Science and Tech Innovation

On May 20, Innovation Working Group coordinator Lorraine Hariton, Special Representative for Commercial and Business Affairs, participated in a panel discussion at the Russian Embassy in Washington, D.C. on "New Initiatives for Scientific and Technological Innovation" during a conference entitled "Doing Business with the BRICS."

Hariton highlighted the work of the BPC's Innovation Working Group in furthering innovation collaboration between the United States and Russia. The emergence of productive new trends, such as the "Regionalization of Cooperation" and the "Commercialization of Innovation" have spawned partnerships between Maryland's and Nizhny Novgorod's Innovation Corridors, and between U.S. and Russian universities, that bring research out of labs and into application by building tech transfer capacity, ties to business, and entrepreneurship in both countries.

Approximately 100 government and private sector representatives, mostly from the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), attended the panel discussion. The State

Department's Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Dan Russell also provided remarks. The conference was arranged by the Eurasia Center and The Eurasian Business Coalition at the Russian Embassy.



L to R: Daniel Satinsky, Foresight Science & Technology; Lorraine J. Hariton, U.S. Department of State; Irina Mitchell, CRDF Global; Paul Rogers, GE Global Software. Photo credit: Embassy of the Russian Federation

Military Cooperation

Russian Military Academy visit to U.S. National Defense University

Supporting the goals of the Military Cooperation Working Group, a delegation from Russia's Military Academy of the General Staff (MAGS) visited the U.S. National Defense University (NDU) late March, the first such visit in nearly six years. The newly appointed MAGS Commandant, Gen-Col Sergey Makarov, led a small delegation on the highly successful three-day visit to NDU.

Makarov and his delegation received detailed briefings from all of NDU's major components, and in discussions exhibited great interest in how elements of the structure and curriculum of U.S. Professional Military Education might be used in the process of ongoing reform in MAGS and throughout the Russian system. The tone of the meetings was warm and engaging, and Makarov showed interest in furthering deeper

contacts and exchanges between MAGS and NDU.

Regional Commands Meet

Officials from the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) visited Russia's Asia-Pacific Region/Eastern Military District (EAMD) on April 19 - 20. PACOM meetings with EAMD leadership is a positive step toward future Combatant Command-Military District regional engagement on issues of mutual interest. The meeting was made possible by the Military Cooperation Working Group's engagement with regional military groups.

2013 Work Plan

The U.S. and Russian sides signed the Military Cooperation Working Group (MCWG) 2013 Work Plan in April. Already the MCWG has completed seven of the 78 programming events contained within the Work Plan. In addition, the MCWG anticipates nearly 30 additional events outside the agreed upon Work Plan for the coming year.

USS Lassen Observes World War II Victory Day

In the spirit of cooperation under the Military Cooperation Working Group, the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Lassen arrived in Vladivostok May 7 to foster U.S. ties with the Russian navy. The visit coincides with Victory Day, the Russian celebration of the end of World War II in Europe. American sailors attended Victory Day events and laid a wreath at the Pacific Fleet Battle Fame Memorial.



Russian and U.S. Navy Sailors present a wreath at the Russian Pacific Fleet Battle Fame Memorial in Vladivostok

While in Vladivostok, sailors from Lassen participated in volunteer events in the area, including visiting children at a local cancer ward, playing games with young people at the Parus Nadezhdy shelter for at-risk youth, meeting and speaking with Russian Veterans and holding a friendly soccer game with Russian sailors.

In Other News...

Secretary of State Kerry Visits Moscow for Talks with Foreign Minister Lavrov

United States Secretary of State John Kerry traveled to Moscow May 7 – 8, where he met with senior Russian government officials to discuss pressing issues of bilateral and global significance.

During the trip, Secretary Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov agreed to organize a peace conference to address the ongoing violence in Syria.



Kerry and Lavrov in Moscow Photo Credit: U.S. Department of State

Intercontinental Bering Straits Swim

Cold water swimmers from around the world came together in April in an unprecedented relay across the Bering Strait between Siberia and Alaska. Forty swimmers from fourteen countries joined forces to achieve what no swimmer could do alone – swim across the 82 kilometers (51 miles/44 nautical miles) of frigid waters of the Bering Strait.

The swim was dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the “Friendship Flight” between Nome, Alaska and Provideniya, Siberia, and honors U.S.-Russian cooperation during World War II.

The waters of the Bering Strait average 5-8 Celsius (41-46 Fahrenheit) in April. The total relay took approximately 40 hours to complete.

Spirit of the Elbe

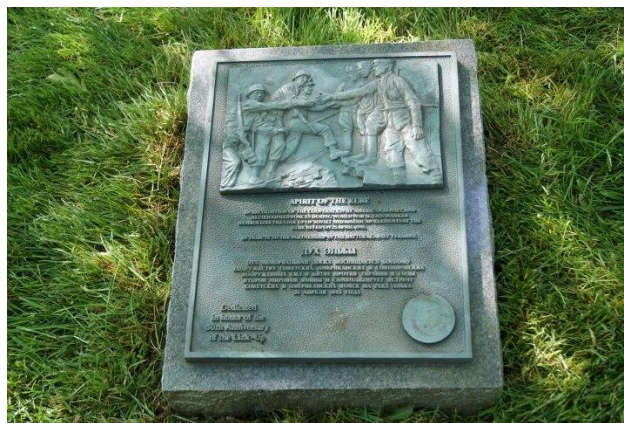
On April 25 veterans of World War II, their families, and current members of the armed forces performed a solemn 'Spirit of the Elbe'

wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia. Stepping in formation under the bright rays of the sun, veterans and diplomatic officials placed their wreaths at the Elbe marker and children of diplomats laid red carnations.



U.S. State Department officials placing a wreath. Photo credit: Embassy of the Russian Federation.

The ceremony is held annually at the 'Spirit of the Elbe' memorial plaque, which commemorates the brotherhood of Allied troops during the Second World War. Since 1995, Russian and American delegations have been laying flowers and wreaths at the memorial to mark the Soviet and U.S. armies' “link-up” meeting at the River Elbe in Germany on April 25, 1945.



Elbe Link-up Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery

The commemoration was organized by the Russian Embassy in Washington, D.C. Ambassador Sergey Kislyak stressed the



importance of Elbe Day for history and for developing relations between the U.S. and Russia.

Events Calendar

June 5 – 7

The International Drug Enforcement Conference will be held in Moscow.

June 5 – 7

The U.S. - Russia Polar Bear Agreement Commission will hold its annual meeting in St. Petersburg. Participants will review information presented by the Agreement's Scientific Working Group about abundance and trends of the Alaska-Chukotka polar bear population and the yearly quota for subsistence harvest.

June 9 – 22

A U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Trails Specialist will travel to Lake Baikal, Russia to provide technical consultation to the local NGO, Great Baikal Trail Association, on the planning and construction of hiking trails in protected areas, with the aim of increasing educational eco-tourism opportunities in the region.

June 17 – 18

The 39th G8 Summit will be held in Lough Erne, Ireland. Presidents Obama and Putin plan to meet on the sidelines.

June 25

The Emergency Situations Working Group will hold its fourth plenary session in Washington, D.C., chaired by Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Fugate and Russian Minister of Emergency Situations Puchkov.

June 25 – July1

Technical exchange between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the

Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation on land revitalization and reuse, and the application of U.S. innovative technologies in addressing legacy contaminated sites.

June 24 – 25

The Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Security Working Group will hold a plenary session in St. Petersburg.

June 24 – 28

The Sukachev Institute of Forest, a Siberian Division of the Russian Academy of Sciences, will hold a seminar at which delegates will present research on sustainable forest management, conducted as part of the Institute's collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service. The research will also be published as a booklet of abstracts.

June 26 – July 6

A three person U.S. Forest Service team will travel to the Koppi River Reserve in the Russian Far East to work with the Wild Salmon Center, the Khabarovsk Wildlife Foundation, and other local partners to provide recommendations for the development of a formal restoration plan for the reserve.

July

Following successful Atlas Vision 2013 peacekeeping exercise planning missions in March and May, the joint U.S. Army Europe – Russian Ground Forces exercises are expected to take place in July.

July 2

The U.S. Geological Survey will join the University of Tomsk and the Russian Ministry of Education and Science, at a fire science workshop in St. Petersburg, Russia focused on the requirements, approaches, methods, and programs for using geospatial data products in wildfire management decision support in the United States and Russia. Participants will



discuss applications that follow 'best practices' or trade-offs between wildland fire suppression, vegetation/fuel management, wildland fire prevention, and strategic risk management. The workshop is scheduled to coincide with a meeting of the "International Association for Wildland Fire" (IAWF).

July 4 – 5

The U.S. Forest Service will meet with Pacific Environment NGOs in a workshop on community-based fire management.

July 8 – 13

The U.S. Naval War College and the Russian Kuznetsov Naval Academy will hold joint war game exercises in St. Petersburg, Russia.

July 9 – 22

Specialists from the U.S. Forest Service on recreation, interpretation, and landscape architecture will visit two protected areas (Baikalsky Zapovednik and Zabaikalsky National Park) to assist the protected areas in plans to provide opportunities for ecotourism, interpretation, and closer cooperation with local communities.

Background on the BPC: In 2009, President Obama and then-President Medvedev created the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission to improve coordination between our countries, identify areas of cooperation, and pursue joint projects and actions that strengthen strategic stability, international security, economic well-being, and the development of ties between the Russian and American peoples. The BPC now consists of 20 working groups and numerous sub-working groups. President Putin and President Obama have both re-affirmed their commitment to the BPC.

Please visit the BPC website:

www.state.gov/russiabpc or contact:

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The BPC's 20 Working Groups are:

- Agriculture •Arms Control and International Security •Business Development and Economic Relations •Counternarcotics •Counterterrorism
- Defense Relations •Education, Culture, Sports, and Media •Emergency Situations •Energy
- Environment •Health •Innovation •Intelligence
- Military Cooperation •Military Technical Cooperation •Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Security •Rule of Law •Science and Technology
- Space Cooperation •Steering